— *Solidarity • Democracy • Socialism*

Members' Letter

March '97

SOCIALIST Party

Dear Member,

Hope you are well. Over the last month members have been very active on a whole range of issues including general election preparation; opposition to the Partnership 2000 deal; trying to end the water charges court cases and other issues in the different constituencies, including workers' rights in the Airport, the bin strike in Dublin South, on drug treatment, crime and traffic problems.

The Election - Things are Hotting Up

Late May and early June are the dates most mentioned for the General Election. However nothing should be taken for granted. While Labour have suffered in recent opinion polls and with the retirement of three TDs, the Government may try to gain an advantage and go earlier into an election if the Fianna Fail politician at the centre of the Dunnes money controversy is named, as has been predicted recently.

Our election work has gone well (see below). It is very important that we increase the momentum and get as much work done by the end of March as possible. We should try as far as possible to be prepared to fight an election anytime from the start of April.

our application to be registered with the state as an officially recognised party for the purposes of elections has been accepted and ratified by the Registrar of the Dail.

No. of Constituencies	**5**
Leaflets Dropped	**86,000**
No. of Houses Visited	**3,330**
Cash Raised from Visits and others for Electoral Work	**£2,850**

The response on the door steps has been very positive, with most members indicating that they would vote for us or were open to the idea. Consolidating the support and good will that flows from our water charges work will be the vital springboard upon which our election chances are based. In general we found that in roughly 15 to 30% of houses there was no answer. We are getting votes in significantly more than half of the homes visited, with the actual numbers of votes committed considerably more again.

We cannot take these commitments for granted. We will need to follow up this canvass at an appropriate time, perhaps with a letter hand delivered to each member household, broadening out our programme on taxation justice etc. With St Patrick's Day and Easter both coming in March, we need to pull out all the stops to get as much work as possible done over the next few weeks.

Our members in Cork are playing leading roles in pushing along the election campaign of Paddy Mulcahy, as are our members in Dublin North East in the campaign of Owen Poole.

Election News Round-Up

Manifesto:

A draft manifesto has been produced and is circulating in the constituencies for comment and suggestion. Members should feel free to make any points, but keep in mind there is a limit on space so we can't go into our complete policies on every subject.

Policy Statements:

The Regional Executive Committee have commissioned drafts of policy statements on Drugs, Crime, Women's Rights, Taxation, Public Transport and Pensions.

The idea is to hold press conferences around these statements over the next couple of months so we can raise the profile of the Socialist Party on a number of issues.

Posters:

Following cost comparisons the Regional Executive Committee is in favour of using silk screened poster (printed directly onto the plastic boards). It is more expensive and we won't be able to have loads printed but it will cut down considerably on time and effort and such posters are more durable. The posters will be printed before the election.

Socialist Party Launched in the North

Our members in the north launched the Socialist Party at a very successful rally of fifty people held in Belfast on February 22nd. Speakers at the rally included Peter Hadden (Socialist Party Northern Secretary) Dave Nellist (former socialist MP for Coventry South East 1983 - '92) and Joe Higgins.

We got good news coverage for the launch. We will include a full report on the work of our members in the North in a future letter.

All Dublin Convention for Every Householder with Sommonses over Water Charges
National Concert Hall
8th March 11.15am

With a massive attendance and a lot of media coverage it is possible that this convention could create enough pressure to make them drop all court cases.

All members should do everything in their power to come to this convention and help out on the day. It could be one of the most significant events ever organised by the Federation. The Party will be selling our paper; giving out leaflets and hosting an information stall on the day. Please try to be there.

Singer songwriter, Elanor McEvoy with some of her band will start proceedings at around 11.30am with a few songs.

Reception ...You Are Invited

Our offices at 141 Thomas Street, top floor above Massey's Florists, have been recently decorated. We also have purchased new computer, desk top printing and photo/image scanning equipment that will help improve the quality of our printed material.

We are holding a reception for all members and supporters, to show them around and to explain the work that goes on at the office.

It will be held on Saturday 15th of March between 7.30pm and 9.00pm. Our offices and equipment are very important gains, achieved by the party from the hard work of the members. It would be great if you could come along. Wine and snacks will be provided. Make a night! Following the reception the Dublin City Branch is holding a St Patrick's Night Social in the Parnell Mooney, entrance £2.50 unwaged £4.50 waged.

'The Voice'

The Regional Executive Committee is proposing that from the next issue our paper would be called *"The Voice"*. It was mentioned when we changed the name to *Socialist Voice* that it was intended to have 'Socialist' in the title for a while to help link the paper to our new name the Socialist Party. We have received a letter from the Communist Party who have told us that they have regularly produced a paper entitled *Socialist Voice* for years. Obviously we were not aware of this. Their paper is apparently registered with a number of historic libraries etc. and they implied that if we kept using the name they would take further action! On that basis we feel now that is an appropriate time to modify the name to *The Voice*. We have successfully linked the paper to the party and we believe that this is not a difficulty. If any members have a serious problem with this alteration please contact one of the Regional Executive members at the office immediately as the paper is due out very soon.

Please Pay Your Paper Sub

If you haven't yet paid the £10 yearly paper subscription, could you try to make an arrangement to pay it as soon as possible. Getting the paper sent straight to their homes has been warmly received by a lot of members. If for some reason you did not get a copy of issue no.3 please ring Susan Fitzgerald at the office.

Regional Conference and Rally

Friday April 25th and Saturday 26th have been provisionally pencilled in as dates for an election rally (Friday night) followed on the Saturday by a one day Regional Conference of the Socialist Party, both to be held in Dublin. More information will be communicated to you soon.

The next few weeks are very important. In order to be in a state of readiness by early April we need all the members to fully participate in the work of the branches. If you are not sure what is happening contact your branch secretary or ring the office.

Best Wishes,

Kevin McLoughlin
on behalf of the Regional Executive Committee